

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A method of conducting a game, comprising:  
providing, in association with a primary game, a bonus game comprising a simulated contest against an opponent;  
providing said player an opportunity to play one of said primary game or said bonus game;  
in association with play of said bonus game, providing said player an opportunity to select a bonus game character to represent said player in said simulated contest against said opponent; and  
randomly determining an outcome of at least one of said primary game and said bonus game.
  2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising selecting said bonus game character from a library of available bonus game characters.
  3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising enabling said player to at least modify at least some aspects of said bonus game character by selecting bonus game character elements from a library of available bonus game character elements.
  4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising enabling said player to select a previously created bonus game character selected in a previous bonus game.
  5. The method according to claim 1, wherein said primary game requires placement of a wager as a precondition for play thereof.
  6. The method according to claim 5, wherein said primary game comprises one of reel-type slot machine games, card games, keno games, lotto games, and bingo games.

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7. The method according to claim 1, wherein said opportunity to play said bonus game is enabled only upon the occurrence of certain predetermined bonus trigger events associated with play of said primary game and said bonus game.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein said certain bonus game trigger events include at least some of a randomly timed bonus event trigger, a specified outcome from play of said primary game, a challenge from another player already participating in said bonus game, and use of a predetermined number of credits to buy play in said bonus game.

9. The method according to claim 1, further comprising randomly determining said outcome of said primary game or said bonus game using a random number generator.

10. The method according to claim 1, further comprising implementing said opponent as another bonus game character.

11. The method according to claim 10, further comprising implementing said simulated contest as a simulation of combat.

12. The method according to claim 10, wherein said simulated contest comprises a visual representation on a display of said simulation of combat.

13. The method according to claim 11, wherein said simulated contest includes a substantially continuous display of competition to provide a visual perception of being ongoing.

14. The method according to claim 11, further comprising structuring said bonus game characters and said simulation of combat from a selection of modular components.

15. A method of conducting a game, comprising:  
providing, in association with a primary game, a bonus game comprising a simulated contest between two characters;  
providing at least two game characters for play of said bonus game, at least one game character being an offensive character in said bonus game and at least another game character being a defensive character in said bonus game;  
providing a player an opportunity to play one of said primary game or said bonus game;  
in association with play of said bonus game, providing said player an opportunity to select a bonus game character;  
randomly determining an outcome of at least one of said primary game and said bonus game.

16. The method according to claim 15, further comprising selecting said offensive character and said defensive character from a library.

17. The method according to claim 15, further comprising enabling said player to at least modify a bonus game character by selection of character elements from a library of available bonus game character elements.

18. The method according to claim 15, further comprising enabling said player to select a previously created bonus game character used in a previous bonus game.

19. The method according to claim 15, said primary game requires placement of a wager as a precondition for play thereof.

20. The method according to claim 19, wherein said primary game includes one of reel-type slot machine games, card games, keno games, lotto games, and bingo games.

21. The method according to claim 15, wherein said player is provided an opportunity to play said bonus game only upon the occurrence of at least one bonus game trigger event.

22. The method according to claim 21, wherein said at least one bonus game trigger event includes at least one of a randomly timed bonus trigger event, a specified outcome in said primary game, a challenge from another player already participating in said bonus game, and use of a specified number of credits to buy into said bonus game.

23. The method according to claim 15, further comprising randomly determining said outcome using a random number generator.

24. The method according to claim 15, wherein said simulated contest comprises a contest between one offensive character and one defensive character.

25. The method according to claim 24, wherein said simulated contest further comprises a display of physical competition between said one offensive character and said one defensive character.

26. The method according to claim 24, wherein said simulated contest comprises a display of combat between said one offensive character and said one defensive character.

27. The method according to claim 25, wherein said competition is displayed as a substantially ongoing competition.

28. The method according to claim 25, further comprising structuring said bonus game characters and said competition from a selection of modular components.

29. A method of conducting a game, comprising:  
 providing a plurality of gaming machines, each gaming machine of said plurality of gaming machines configured for play of a primary game and to enable play of a bonus game;  
 providing, in association with play of said bonus game, at least one display for exhibiting at least one competition between at least two different characters, each of said at least two different characters being associated with a gaming machine of said plurality of gaming machines;  
 exhibiting a simulation of said at least one competition between said at least two different characters on said at least one display to an outcome; and  
 determining at least one award associated with said outcome of said at least one competition

30. The method according to claim 29, wherein said at least one competition comprises a plurality of competitions.

31. The method according to claim 30, further comprising associating an award value with each competition of said plurality of competitions.

32. The method according to claim 31, further comprising associating differing award values with at least two competitions of said plurality of competitions.

33. The method according to claim 29, wherein exhibiting said at least one competition comprises simulating a physical contest between said at least two characters and randomly determining said outcome.

34. The method according to claim 33, determining said at least one award according to said outcome of said contest.

35. The method according to claim 29, wherein said primary game includes one of reel-type slot machine games, card games, keno games, lotto games, and bingo games.

36. The method according to claim 29, further comprising providing a player playing at a gaming machine of said plurality of gaming machines an opportunity for selecting one of said at least two different characters.

37. A system for playing a game of chance, comprising:  
a plurality of networked gaming machines for playing of a primary game and a bonus game, each gaming machine of said plurality of gaming machines having an associated random number generator for randomly generating a plurality of outcomes in play of said primary game; and  
at least one display device connected to said plurality of gaming machines, said at least one display device for exhibiting said bonus game in the form of at least one competition comprising at least two characters, each character of said at least two characters being associated with a gaming machine of said plurality of gaming machines.

38. The system of claim 37, further comprising a bonus event computer networked to said plurality of gaming machines, said central server computer comprising a random number generator, said random number generator configured to randomly generate an outcome for play of said bonus game.

39. The system of claim 37, wherein said plurality of gaming machines are positioned for viewing said at least one display device.

40. The system of claim 37, wherein said at least one display device includes a centrally located display device separate from said plurality of gaming machines.

41. The system of claim 37, wherein said primary game includes one of slot machine games, card games, keno games, lotto games, and bingo games.

42. The system of claim 37, wherein each gaming machine of said plurality of networked gaming machines is networked using at least one communication link including the Internet, a Wide Area Network, a Local Area Network and a wireless communication link.

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